



St Joseph's  
Hospice

## Corneal Donation

Can I help others after  
my death?

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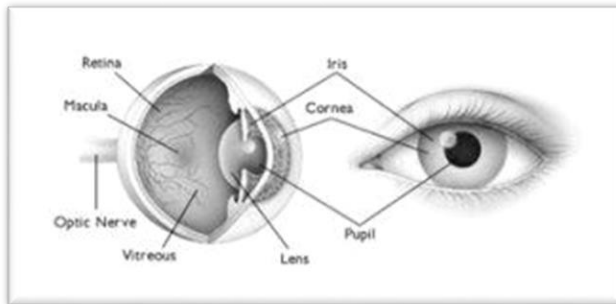
### **What is this leaflet about?**

At St Joseph's Hospice we feel our patients should be informed about the choices available to them. Many of our patients do not realise they can be tissue donors, should they want to.

St Joseph's Hospice patients have a variety of illnesses. Most of these do not prevent the donation of the cornea.

### **What is a cornea?**

The cornea is part of the eye. It is the clear round section of tissue at the front which allows light to enter. It is the shape and size of a contact lens. A healthy cornea is needed for normal eyesight.



### **Why might I consider donating?**

Donating your corneas can potentially give the gift of sight to two to four blind people.

Corneal transplants have a very high success rate. They can sometimes also relieve pain for people with disease or injury of the eyes. Adults up to the age of 85 years can be corneal donors.

There are a few medical conditions that limit corneal donation, including degenerative neuro conditions including dementia, MND, Hep B or C, HIV and cancers of the blood as well as Covid-19 infection with symptoms in the last 28 days of life. We can advise you further about your condition and donation.

### **How and when can I donate?**

In order for the cornea to be useful, donation needs to take place within 24 hours of death. Specially trained healthcare professionals undertake a careful, short procedure to remove the eyes. They do this in such a way that the person looks unchanged afterwards. Sometimes mild bruising may occur. The deceased is treated with dignity and respect.

### **What about my family?**

Some families may gain comfort that others have benefited at their time of loss and sadness. The donation process would not delay funeral plans. Your family could still view your body if they want to, after the donation procedure has occurred.

It is important to let your family know your wishes regarding donation as formal consent for donation is taken from the next of kin after your death. Such discussions are also useful if you don't want to donate so your family know what your thoughts are.

Being cared for at home, in hospital or at the hospice can all allow you to donate.

### **Who can I talk about this further with?**

Deciding to donate your corneas is a very personal decision and entirely your choice.

Doctors and nurses at the hospice are able to discuss tissue donation and answer your questions. Some patients may find it useful to talk with members of our hospice chaplaincy team or their religious or spiritual leaders.

You can contact the National Referral Centre (NRC) on 0800 432 0559.

Thank you for taking the time to read this leaflet.